

help keep our progress strong and our prosperity going in the years ahead.

NOTE: This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Statement on the Northern Ireland Peace Process

December 15, 2000

I am delighted that loyalist paramilitary groups in Northern Ireland have today committed themselves to an open-ended cessation of hostilities and developed peaceful mechanisms to address disputes that may arise. This action responds to the overwhelming desire of the people of Northern Ireland to see their peace flourish and endure, which I sensed during my visit this week. I congratulate the loyalist political leaders who I know worked so hard to bring this about.

NOTE: This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

The President's Radio Address

December 16, 2000

Good morning. This week, as I work to conclude the last budget negotiations of my Presidency, I'm reminded how far we've come these past 8 years. We now live in a time of unprecedented peace and prosperity. But we didn't get there by accident. We made tough choices, based on core values of opportunity for all, responsibility from all, and a community of all Americans.

Today I want to talk about two elements critical to our continued success: first, our progress in moving people from welfare to work; and second, our continuing commitment to fiscal discipline and a budget that puts our people first.

Vice President Gore and I took office in 1993 with a pledge to end welfare as we know it. Thanks to comprehensive welfare reform, a renewed sense of responsibility, and the strongest economy in a generation, millions of former welfare recipients now know the dignity of work.

Today I am pleased to announce that over the past 8 years we've cut welfare caseloads by more than 8 million people. Last year alone 1.2 million parents on welfare went to work, determined to build better lives. Nationwide over the last 8 years, welfare rolls have dropped nearly 60 percent and now are the lowest in more than 30 years.

We've been able to sustain this progress year after year because Government, the private sector, and welfare recipients themselves all have done their parts. Together, we are finally breaking the cycle of dependence that has long crippled the hopes of too many families.

When we enacted landmark welfare reform in 1996, I insisted that Congress provide incentives to reward States for helping people to find jobs and to keep jobs. Today I'm pleased to announce that 28 States will receive a total of \$200 million in bonuses for doing just that. These grants will enable States to help even more parents go to work and succeed on the job. I urge States to use these resources to provide the necessary support—from child care to transportation to training—that can make a critical difference between welfare checks and paychecks.

We've also worked hard to help families leaving welfare meet the challenge of affordable health care. In the bipartisan budget package I will soon sign, we will extend Medicaid coverage so that thousands of parents who leave welfare can keep the health coverage protecting them and their children. This budget also includes funding to help cover more uninsured children, speed coverage for patients with Lou Gehrig's disease, and increase payments to hospitals, teaching facilities, home health agencies, and nursing homes in order to ensure quality health care.

We have also secured an extra \$817 million to help working families afford child care, to meet their responsibilities both at work and at home. These and other child care resources will serve over 2.2 million children next year.

In this budget, we're also passing our historic new markets and community renewal initiative, the most significant effort ever to help hard-pressed communities lift themselves up through private investment and entrepreneurship. With the help of our new-

markets tax credit, 40 strengthened empowerment zones and 40 renewal communities, this initiative will spur billions and billions of dollars in private investment to communities that have not yet shared in our Nation's great economic revival.

From the streets of our central cities to the hills of Appalachia to the rugged vistas of our Native American reservations to the Mississippi Delta, we are giving people the tools of opportunity to make the most of their potential.

Finally, this budget also includes vital investments in our children and their education. With over \$900 million dedicated for the very first time to school renovation, thousands of local school districts finally will be able to give our children the classrooms they deserve.

We've increased funding by 25 percent to stay on track to hire 100,000 highly qualified new teachers to reduce class size in the early grades. We have nearly doubled funding for after-school programs to help more than 1.3 million students, while increasing support for teacher training and for turning around failing schools. And to open the doors of college even wider so that more of our young people can walk through them, we've increased the maximum Pell grant to an all-time high of \$3,750. That's up nearly \$1,500 since 1993.

If we continue to invest in our people and create opportunities for them, if we continue to honor and reward work, our possibilities are truly without limit. By reaching out and working together, our best days still lie ahead. This budget proves it. The work of the American people prove it. The successful desire of people to move from welfare to work proves it.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 10:49 a.m. on December 15 in the Oval Office at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on December 16. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 15 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast.

Remarks at a Memorial Service for Charles F.C. Ruff

December 16, 2000

Sue, Christy, Carin, Maggie, other family and friends. I was sitting in this service listening to Chuck's family members, friends, partner speak about him, and I was thinking he'd be fairly embarrassed by all these attempts to canonize him. So they put one client on the program. [*Laughter*]

I have been on the receiving end of all this wisdom you have been celebrating, and he always told me what he thought, especially when I did not want to hear it.

Chuck Ruff became the White House Counsel at an unusual point in history, when the White House was in the hands of the Democratic Party and the Congress was in the hands of a particular wing of the Republican Party, and a lot of the work of the White House Counsel was generated by the attempts of Congress to turn every political difference into a legal issue.

And Chuck had to be calm in the face of all of it: Attempts to prove that our policy on climate change, for example, was actually a secret socialist plot to destroy the free enterprise system; serious questions from a person who believed that a good form of criminal investigation was shooting bullets into a watermelon in his backyard. And Chuck never lost his cool, never lost his temper, and never let me entirely lose my sense of humor about what often was a patently absurd situation.

And then there were the serious issues beneath all the rancor and back-and-forth. And every single day—every single day—I was so profoundly grateful that my Counsel was so strong and wise and good and that he believed so profoundly in our Constitution and rule of law.

As others have said, he never sought the spotlight, but when the moment came, he certainly shined. Millions of Americans saw him at work, mind and spirit. He cared about justice. He taught it; he shared it; and he lived it. His whole life was about doing good and doing right.